IN THE ABSTRACT:

Kindly amend the Abstract of the Disclosure, as follows:

Initial binary data to be communicated or stored is obtained[[,]]. ~~and a~~ A characteristic Hamming weight of the initial binary data is determined. A comparison is ~~then~~ made between the characteristic Hamming weight and a predetermined value[[,]]. ~~and the~~ The initial binary data is processed based on the comparison to ~~thereby~~ develop processed binary data having a Hamming weight not less than the characteristic Hamming weight of the initial binary data. A communication encoding apparatus includes a data input for receiving initial binary data having a characteristic Hamming weight and a processor in communication with the data input for determining the characteristic Hamming weight of the initial binary data. The processor ~~also~~ performs a comparison of the characteristic Hamming weight ~~of the initial binary data~~ with a predetermined value and processes the initial binary data based on the comparison to ~~thereby~~ develop processed binary data having a Hamming weight not less than the characteristic Hamming weight of the initial binary data.

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